

Resignation of the European Commission

Position paper (March 1999)

The Bureau of the European League for Economic Co-operation has studied the events leading to the resignation of the European Commission, in particular it has read the first report of the Committee of Independent Experts on "allegations regarding fraud, mismanagement and nepotism in the European Commission" published 15 March 1999.

The Bureau welcomes the Council's quick reaction and Mr. Romano Prodi's nomination. It nevertheless looked into the consequences this decision may have on present and planned steps towards European construction, and reached the following conclusions:

- 1.** Refraining from any statement regarding the contents and seriousness of the issues under investigation, ELEC regrets that cases of malfunctioning cast a shadow over the significant quality work accomplished by the Commissioners over the past four years, in particular achieving the internal market, launching the euro, and preparing Agenda 2000.
- 2.** Whilst it respects the decision taken, which was of a political nature, ELEC - which has studied and analysed Community activities since its inception - reaffirms its attachment to the European Commission as an institution independent from the Member States and a force for proposal and initiative at the service of Europe. ELEC also stresses its support for an independent European public function whose openness and understanding of the community's interest have spawned its many successes since 1958.
- 3.** In the immediate future, ELEC calls on the governments:
 - ◇ **to designate** as soon as possible a Commission that is operational and able to address its major tasks at hand, in particular to accomplish the euro's successful launching, reform the CAP, strengthen competition policy and to make the necessary progress towards tax harmonisation;
 - ◇ **to consider** institutional reform - long pending - as a priority; especially to establish the number of commissioners and control of Europe's administration, etc...
 - ◇ **to take measures** needed to further European political union, primarily in the realm of defense and to thereby affirm its presence and effectiveness on the international scene.

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